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The South River Current



Promoting interest and collaboration for watershed stewardship

Riverfest

SATURDAY, APRIL 27 2024 • 10 am - 4:30 pm



Connections: Meet the Neighbors—Mammals, But Other Creatures Too

Community events provide opportunities for residents to meet and reconnect, spend time in the great outdoors, and learn more about the local environment. Riverfest is a free event designed for residents and visitors to explore

information about environmental conservation and watershed stewardship while enjoying the waterfront along Constitution Park South. Family and friends can escape the daily grind and check out the canoe rides, nature exhibits, the Fish n' Fun Rodeo, the Stream Safari, a children's art table, and face painting activities. Local food vendors will also be on hand to keep everyone fueled until the annual Great South River Duck Race at 4 p.m. More details can be found at <https://riverfestwaynesboro.org/>. Race duck certificates for the duck race are available for purchase in advance at Stone Soup Books, 150 Race Avenue, Waynesboro, or on April 27th at the park. The festivities run from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Please be aware that Riverfest is a rain or shine event and, although pets are loved by all, Riverfest organizers request you leave them at home. We hope you will join us for a fun day of entertainment, education, and exploration.



Top Row: Seeded Flooded Forest (left), River Theater Toe (right)

Bottom Row: River Access Path (left), Flooded Forest Inlet with Site for Pedestrian Bridge (right)

Watershed Restoration: Picking Up Speed at the Preserve

Work is well underway for the new South River Preserve. Innovative design elements have combined aesthetically pleasing landscapes with valuable

environmental function. Consider the area of low ground transformed into a flooded forest (pictured above). During heavy or long-term rain events, water runoff will accumulate in this lowland area and be filtered naturally by the planted trees and wildflowers before following its natural path into the South River. That's clever planning! Here are some more progress details:

Steps Completed

- Approximately five acres of asphalt have been removed.
- The surface has been re-graded for the flooded forest area that has been seeded with meadow mixes.
- The river theater has been created by carving out a section of the bank for a clear river view with easy access.
- Two river access trails have been cut in to aid anglers in getting to popular fishing holes. These will also decrease bank erosion.
- The greenway has been realigned through the site and includes a new pedestrian bridge over the in fall to the flooded forest.
- In-stream fish habitat improvements have begun. Several of the existing cross vanes have been reworked to create deeper pools, and rock and wood snag clusters have been added in the river to provide shelter and hiding places for fish.

Next Steps

- Over 200 large trees will be planted across the site this spring and fall.
- Parking areas and shared-use paths will be paved this spring.
- A mix of various native tree whips (e.g., small caliper and bare root trees) will be planted in the flooded forest.
- Restoration on the Rockfish Run Streambank, just opposite the preserve, will proceed once work on the west side is complete.

To find out more, click [here](#).



Did You Know?

- 2024 is Riverfest's Year of the Eastern Screech Owl. The poster contest is complete, and the artwork of the grand prize winner will be featured on the 2024 Riverfest poster. Woot-woot!!
- The land that drains to the South River includes about 234 square miles with approximately 51,700 residents living in the watershed.
- Watershed communities within Augusta and Rockingham counties include Greenville, Sherando, Stuarts Draft, Lyndhurst, Waynesboro, Doods, Crimora, and Harriston.



TRANSFORMATION

Presented By
SOUTH RIVER
Watershed Coalition

Take a Walk Back: From Muck to Magnificence

Newer residents of the South River Watershed only know the South River as the tranquil, picturesque retreat that exists today, but many lifelong residents have vivid memories of the lifeless eyesore it once was. From the mid-1700s to modern times, the South River served as a dumping ground for industry waste. As was a common practice throughout the country, factories and mills used the river to dispose of waste. People thought that the flowing water would dilute the pollution or just carry it further downstream without causing harm, but by the 1970s, the South River (along with many other rivers countrywide) proved this belief was faulty. It had become a two-toned, heavily polluted, sludge-filled mess. A 1971 Virginia Tech study found that the darkly stained, stinky water around the Waynesboro industrial area contained no fish at all. Thankfully, the Federal Clean Water Act, adopted in 1972, established a system of permits and treatment standards for industrial and municipal discharges that restricted the amount of dumping and pollution into waterbodies throughout the country. As a result, several businesses, organizations, and agencies have worked together to clean up the South River. In 2006 another Virginia Tech study in that same area of the river found 23 species of fish and over 500 individual fishes, and the South River is now considered a premier fishing destination in Virginia. Watch this short, entertaining, and enlightening [video](#) to hear firsthand accounts of the South River transformation.



What Can I Do? Bring Your Smile and Grab a Bag on April 20

Ten pieces of litter can be collected by one person in under 60 seconds. When 10 people pick up 10 pieces each, that 10 becomes 100. That's 100 pieces of trash collected in just one minute. Imagine what will happen when the number of people multiplies. On April 20 from 9 a.m. to noon, the Waynesboro Stormwater Program is hosting its annual spring cleanup event. Program volunteers provide trash bags, gloves, water, and trash bag pickup, so all we need to provide is volunteers! Are you able to participate, if even for just an hour? Or perhaps you can get your whole family, neighborhood, business, or organization involved. A few people can make a huge impact. If you are willing to lend a hand, sign up [here](#). Details about the specific meeting location will be provided after sign up is complete. We promise that picking up waste will not be a waste of your time, so come on out!



Now Available:

You can reserve the South River Watershed Coalition office for your community group meeting. The space is outfitted with projection capability and Wi-Fi plus tables and chairs for 15-20 people. The office is located at 510D West Broad Street in Waynesboro. Reservations are free; donations are appreciated. Email info@southernriverwatershed.org.

For upcoming events check the [South River Watershed Coalition Events Page](#).

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